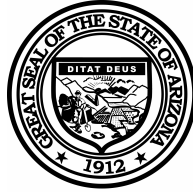


# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA  
DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
12 75 W. WASHINGTON STREET  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926  
[WWW.AZAG.GOV](http://WWW.AZAG.GOV)

ANDREA M. ESQUER  
PRESS SECRETARY  
PHONE: (602) 542-8019  
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – CORRECTED ON APRIL 7, 2006**

---

## **Terry Goddard Responds to Citizens' Disapproval of Yavapai County Plea Agreement**

(Phoenix, Ariz. - April 6, 2006) In response to the large number of citizens who have contacted his office this week regarding a Yavapai County plea agreement, Attorney General Terry Goddard made the following statement today:

My office has received many calls and letters from people objecting to the plea agreement in the Yavapai County assault case, *State v. Bennett and Wheeler*.

Most of the citizens I've heard from believe the agreement is too lenient, and have asked me to review the case or intervene in some way.

I appreciate their concerns and have my own questions about how this case has been prosecuted and about the welfare of the 18 boys who attended the Prescott summer camp and were victims. The way they were treated by their counselors was wrong and offensive. As the parent of a young boy as well as Attorney General, I care very much about their rights and the impact of this episode on their lives.

I have discussed my concerns with the Yavapai County Attorney. My office does not have authority to intervene in this case, however.

The County Attorney's plea agreement was accepted Monday in Maricopa County Superior Court, and the sentencing decision is in the hands of the court. The judge next month will consider a range of sentences from as much as four years in prison for one defendant and two years for the other to as little as probation with no time in jail for both. The victims will have the opportunity to appear before the court and express their views about appropriate punishment.

This case has evoked strong emotions and strong criticism of the legal process. Based on media reports, those criticisms are understandable. My hope is that this strong public outcry will be followed by a sentence that is fair and just.

###